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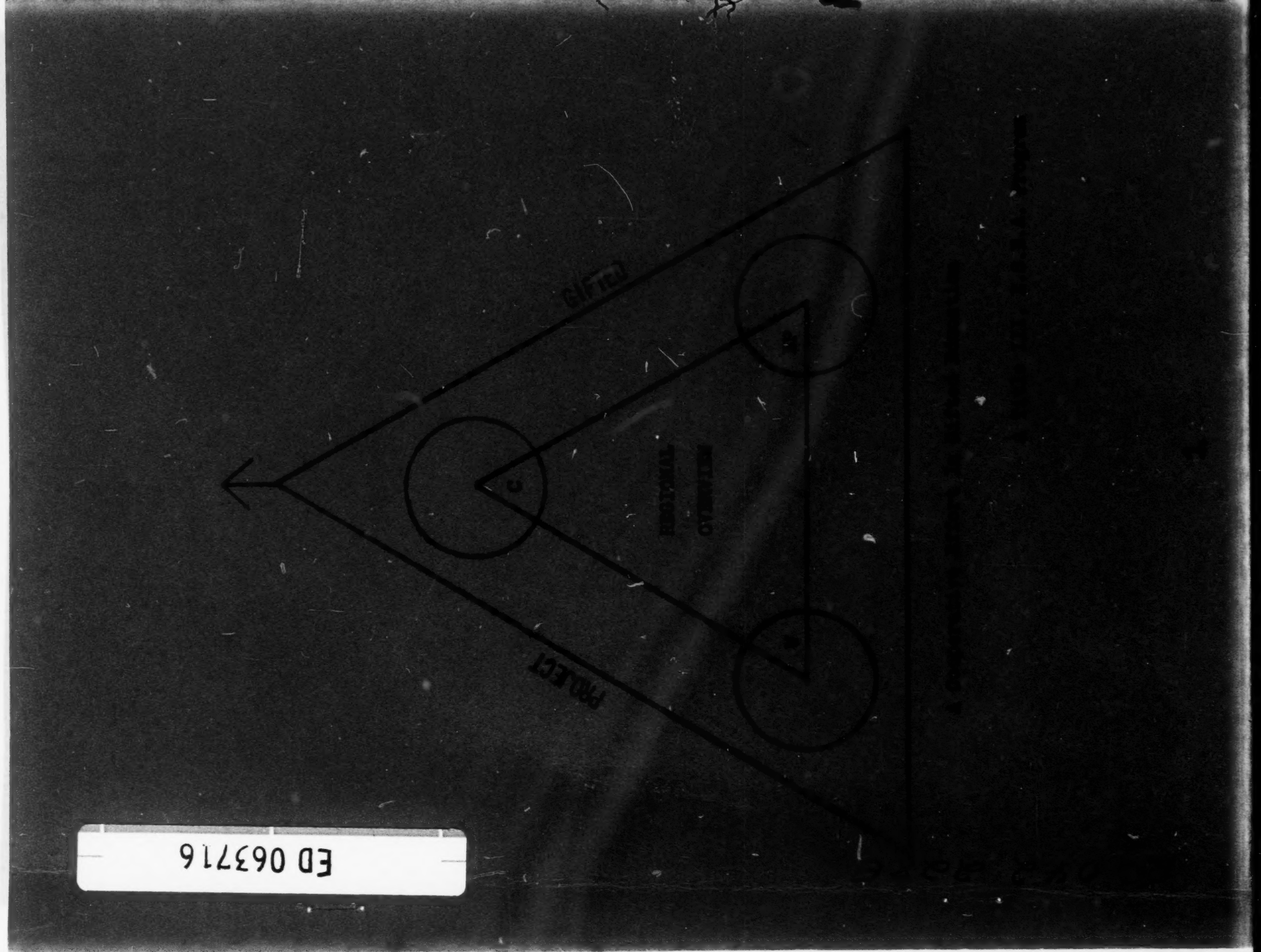
ABSTRACT

Project Gifted, an educational program for gifted intermediate grade children, is described as a tri-city, cooperative effort in the demonstration of diverse educational procedures for the gifted. General goals for the project are noted as identification of gifted children, development of differential experiences to improve the learning programs for gifted children, and development of innovative programs to act as models for other communities. The program is said to focus on training in creative and evaluative thinking. Regional cooperation is found to create new avenues by which the education of gifted students can be achieved. The project is evaluated by a project evaluator. Pretest and posttest in both cognitive and affective domains measure student academic achievement and personal development. Results of the evaluation are thought to indicate that the program is successful. (For related studies, see also EC 042 227, ED 042 229-30.) (CB)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P R O J E C T G I F T E D

A Cooperative Effort In Gifted Education

REGIONAL OVERVIEW

Sponsored by the School Departments of:

Cranston, Rhode Island
Dr. Joseph J. Picano, Jr., Superintendent of Schools

East Providence, Rhode Island
Mr. Edward R. Martin, Superintendent of Schools

Warwick, Rhode Island
Mr. Domenic R. DiLuglio, Superintendent of Schools

Regional Director of Project Gifted
Mr. Julius J. Breit
845 Park Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02910

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Project Gifted is a tri-city, cooperative effort in the demonstration of diverse educational procedures for the gifted. The partners in this regional effort are the School Departments of Cranston, East Providence, and Warwick, Rhode Island with Cranston acting as the LEA. The project is administered by a single project director who provides in-service training, evaluation, dissemination, consultative and guidance services, and overall direction for the project. Each project is distinct in its approach, yet benefits from regional expertise and administration.

Children in grades four through six are directly involved in the program. General goals for the project are:

1) the identification of gifted children;

2) the development of differential experiences to significantly improve the learning programs for gifted children; and

3) the development of innovative programs to act as models for other communities.

In Cranston, the focus is on the training of gifted students in the creative thinking process. Special methodology and content have been introduced into the areas of language arts, science, mathematics, and the social sciences in order to promote critical and evaluative thinking. The children are involved in a continuous progress learning environment with the teachers working together in a co-teaching individualized program. In addition, the Cranston project staff is assisting parents in understanding their gifted children and in helping the student to develop a healthy self-image. Teachers' competencies in answering the special needs of these children are also being supplemented by in-service training.

East Providence has constructed its approach around gifted students who are divided into groups and integrated into each of the regular grade level classrooms. The students are brought together in a resource room environment for two and one-half hours each day to work with a special teacher using a humanities based curriculum. The various contacts made within the regular classroom are expanded upon at this time depending on the particular interest of the student. The need, therefore, is to develop the potential that exists within each child by providing an environment in which multidimensional growth can take place.

Warwick's phase of Project Gifted involves gifted children in a special curriculum featuring differential experiences in creative writing and the visual arts. The students, in small groups of four to eight, travel to a creativity center for a two and one-half hour session once a week to work in such areas as woodcraft, ceramics, graphic arts, costume design, and creative writing.. Extensive use of media centers enhances the offering of the special program.

A regional guidance counselor serves the three communities and has his services prorated by the program director. Psychological services are also available and are obtained through the program director.

Regional cooperation creates new avenues by which the education of the gifted students can be achieved, depending upon the particular educational environment involved. Exchanges of innovative ideas are directed through readily accessible channels of communication not available previous to Project Gifted's existence.

The overall evaluation of the project is conducted by the project evaluator through the facilities made available by the project director at the regional level. Pre and post tests in both the cognitive and the affective domains measure student's progress. Parent attitudes toward the project are also surveyed.

The purpose of evaluation is not to grade or rate a program or to compare one component with another. Rather, the main effort is directed toward finding out what aspects of a given program were successful and in what areas the program has failed to achieve its objectives. The entire evaluative process is aimed at providing program personnel with constructive feedback upon which modifications may be introduced.

The results of evaluation indicate that Project Gifted is a generally successful program, and that in most cases, significant benefits are being derived by students who are participating in the three respective components of the program. Although this conclusion is partially based on an analysis of "hard" data, additional evaluative information also was obtained in visits to Project Gifted classrooms and through interviews with students and parents.

As the program evolves and the interchange of ideas develops, new concepts will undoubtably enter into the original design. If one program shows significant gains in an area which is not encompassed by the program of another community, an opportunity for complementation is possible. Specific areas of inter-community cooperation are gradually emerging as the program approaches the fulfillment of its objectives.